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HER PICTURE

A Comedy in One Act

BY

RACHEL E. BAKER

AUTHOR OF "MR. BOB," "THE CHAPERON," "A KING'S DAUGHTER,"
"AFTER TAPS," ETC.

AS ORIGINALLY PRODUCED BY THE PROSCENIUM CLUB OF ROXBURY,
MASS., APRIL 27TH, 1894

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BOSTON

Walter H. Baker & Co.

1894

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CHARACTERS.

JOHN REMINGTON, *an artist.*

TOM DALTON, *in love with Marjorie.*

MRS. MALLORY, *a widow.*

MARJORIE, *John's sister.*

Time, afternoon. Costumes, modern.



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HER PICTURE.

SCENE. — *A studio in JOHN REMINGTON'S house. Entrances, L. C. and L. in flat. Fireplace, R. in flat. Mantel with glass above it. Fire upon hearth. White fur rug on floor before it. Tea-table by fire. Chair by table. Chair for model upon platform in R. corner. Couch covered with fur rug and sofa-pillows in L. flat. Table with lamp, L. C. Window, R. C. Palm upon table at window. Between door and window, in alcove, a large frame upon draped easel — a curtain hangs before it. Lamp with reflector at side of curtain. Sketches upon walls and easels.*

(*Curtain raised, discovers MARJORIE in model's chair, sitting for portrait. Should wear a light, effective gown. JACK standing before canvas upon easel in C. of stage, painting. Back of canvas seen by audience.*)

MARJORIE (*sighs*). Oh, dear! This is so tiresome, Jack. I have been sitting here more than an hour, I know. You have worked long enough.

JACK. Only a few moments more, my dear. Do try and look interested. You wouldn't like to have me hand you down to posterity as a cross-grained specimen of humanity.

MARJ. I should much prefer to have you hand me down from this chair. I defy any one to help looking bored, with only an old bachelor brother to gaze upon. Now, if it were only —

JACK. Tom. That reminds me —

MARJ. (*interested*). Well?

JACK (*working*). I saw —

MARJ. Yes.

JACK (*deliberately*). I saw—let me see — chrome yellow. (*Looks in paint-box for the color.*) Ah! I have it.

MARJ. O Jack! you are so provoking.

JACK. I met a young man in the park to-day —

MARJ. Yes, yes; go on.

JACK. He — he looked like Tom Dalton.

MARJ. (*delighted*). I knew it was he. What was he doing? Where was he going? And did he ask for me?

JACK. My dear girl! give me time. I can't answer all those questions at once. In answer to your first inquiry, I would say

that Mr. Dalton was having a fine ride in the park. To the second, he seemed to be going —

MARJ. Yes, Jack.

JACK (*working fast*). Toward his destination.

MARJ. (*disgusted*). You are such a brilliant man, I am proud to know you.

JACK. He spoke of you.

MARJ. (*interested*). Well?

JACK. And hoped to call very soon.

MARJ. (*clasps hands very animated*). Dear Tom! Did he say just when, Jack?

JACK. Don't move. You are just as I want you now.

MARJ. Do answer my question. When is he coming? (JACK, *absorbed in his work, does not answer*.) Jack.

JACK. Wait a moment. There, I have it!

MARJ. Well, I haven't my answer.

JACK (*throws down brushes, stands in front of MARJORIE laughing, hands in his pockets*). He is coming — some time, my dear.

MARJ. (*rises, indignant*; JACK *helps her from platform*). You are just as hateful as you can be, Jack Remington. (*Goes to fireplace*; JACK *moves case to back of stage*.)

JACK (*laughing, crosses stage to MARJORIE*). All is fair in love and art, Marjorie. (*Raises her face*.) There was only one way to make this tired little sister of mine look interested, and that was to talk about Tom. But come, light the kettle. (*Turns up lamp on large table*.) And while we are waiting, I will have a smoke. (*Takes pipe from mantel*.) And you can tell me all about Tom.

MARJ. (*lights lamp under kettle upon tea-table*; *sits in chair by table*). You don't deserve to hear anything.

JACK (*throws himself upon rug*). Yes, I do. I have rendered you immortal. Give me a light, sister mine. (*Rests head upon MARJORIE'S knee, holds pipe in mouth*; MARJORIE *lights it*.) There! isn't this solid comfort? My day's work done, a jolly fire to look into, and a dear little sister, only two months home from her schooling across the water, to keep me company. Now for Tom.

MARJ. I beg you will not treat Tom in such an off-hand manner. You say "Now for Tom!" in very much the same tone as I have heard you exclaim "Now for dinner!" Tom is not an inanimate object, sir.

JACK. Decidedly not. When I made my appearance in the studio the other day, I caught him upon the point of kissing you. Quite alive, Marjorie — ha, ha!

MARJ. Do be serious. I met Tom last summer in Switzerland when I travelled with Aunt Fanny. When we returned to Brussels, aunt opened her house for the winter. She used to invite me to dine with her once a week, and sometimes Mr. Dalton would be there.

JACK. Oh, yes! I see.

MARJ. School was so tiresome, it was a delightful change.

JACK. To see Tom ?

MARJ. (*pulls his hair*). No, you stupid ! To dine out. We all came home together.

JACK. "All?"

MARJ. After the graduation Aunt Fanny travelled with me through Italy. Tom was with us. Mrs. Mallory, Tom's sister, was on her way from India ; and when the steamer touched Naples, we took passage on the same ship. It was glorious. I wasn't ill a moment. Poor Mrs. Mallory was, and couldn't promenade with her brother.

JACK. But *you* did.

MARJ. The poor fellow was so lonely. I couldn't be disagreeable, you know.

JACK. Of course not.

MARJ. Now, Jack, if you try to torment me, I won't say another word.

JACK. I am mum. Go on.

MARJ. He was so pleasant to walk and talk with, and so nice to look at, I — I rather liked it.

JACK. Certainly.

MARJ. You know what steamer life is. When you have seen the same person for ten days, why it is natural to like them very much — or not at all.

JACK (*takes sitting position*). The most natural thing in the world. And you like Tom ?

MARJ. Yes ; very much. There !

JACK (*rises*). Good ! I admire your frankness. (*Crosses stage.*)

MARJ. (*rises, and follows him ; takes his arm ; they walk back and forth*). And, Jack — I think that Tom will have something in particular to say to you to-day. He will be so embarrassed. You won't make fun of him ?

JACK. Never ! I like Tom. If he proves himself the right sort of chap, I shall smile upon him with brotherly approval. (*They stand in centre of stage ; JACK has his arm about MARJORIE.*) The man who wins Marjorie Remington must have a heart as good and honest as hers. (*Kisses her.*)

MARJ. (*arm about his neck*). You are such a dear brother ! Why don't you marry some sweet little woman ?

JACK (*arm about MARJORIE ; they cross to fireplace ; JACK takes a piece of bronze from mantel*). Do you see this piece of bronze ?

MARJ. Yes ; I have often wondered what it was. Is it valuable ?

JACK. In a way. Valuable for the lesson it teaches. (*Speaks bitterly.*) Whenever I see a pretty woman, and think that I would like to fall in love with her, I look at this.

MARJ. Why, Jack ! your tone is bitter. What is it ?

JACK. Nothing, dear. It is an old story now. It was given me by a woman whose heart seemed as honest as yours (*Leads her to frame, draws aside curtain.*) This frame once held her picture.

Its emptiness is but the reflection of my own heart. (*Drops curtain; turns away.*) Never trifle with an honest man's love, Marjorie. (*Touches leaf of palm.*) Like this delicate plant, give it warmth and loving care, it grows and spreads its leaves, and by its beauty returns a hundred-fold the thought lavished upon it. Trifle with it, treat it with neglect, it soon loses its beauty, and becomes but a shadow of its former self. (*Comes down stage.*) But enough of this. Give me my tea, and we will talk of something pleasant. (*Laughs.*) Shall we have more of Tom? By Jove! I have just thought of a letter which I must have in by to-night's post. (*Makes for door, L.*)

MARJ. Won't you have a cup of tea first?

JACK. Business first, pleasure afterwards. I won't be long. Keep the fire burning. (*Laughs.*) Tom may appear at any moment. (*Exit R.*)

MARJ. I wish that he would. I haven't seen him since morning. (*Looks out of window.*) He is not in sight, anywhere. (*Comes down stage; goes to mantel, takes up bronze.*) Poor Jack! Some one must have had a very wicked heart to have made him so unhappy. I don't see how a piece of bronze could remind him of a pretty woman. I feel guilty to be so happy myself. (*Sits at table; pours cup of tea.*) I know that Tom will be frightened to death of Jack. (*Drinks tea.*) Oh, dear! It is such a responsibility to choose a husband. (*Sighs.*) It is a great care to be in love. (*Knock at door.*) There he is now. I must not be too glad to see him. (*Places cup on table.*) The proper thing is to affect indifference. (*Kneels before fire; adds log of wood; is very busy with fire when TOM enters.*)

(*Enter TOM DALTON, L.*)

TOM. May I come in? (*MARJORIE does not answer.*) No one here. (*Sees MARJORIE.*) There she is now. (*Places hat on chair by door; crosses to fireplace and embraces MARJORIE.*) May I come in?

MARJ. No, you may not, if this is your usual way of announcing yourself to a lady.

TOM. It would be my only mode of entrance if *you* were the fair one, Marjorie. (*She turns away.*) Do smile upon me. Ah! you would not turn away like that if you only knew.

MARJ. (*turns*). What?

TOM. That I approached this house with fear and trembling. My very blood chilled in my veins.

MARJ. Did you meet with an accident?

TOM. No; I was afraid I should meet your brother.

MARJ. (*relents; laughs*). No need to be afraid of Jack. He is the dearest brother in the world. I have something to tell you, Tom. (*Sits upon couch.*)

TOM (*alarmed*). Break it to me gently, Marjorie. Does he object? (*Seated beside MARJORIE.*)

MARJ. No; he likes you.

TOM. Three cheers for brother Jack! I admire his taste. He is the sort of man I like. Ah, Marjorie, your words have sent the aforesaid blood leaping and surging upon its onward course. Thomas, whose surname is Dalton, is himself again.

MARJ. (*crosses to tea-table*). Shall I serve you a cup of tea?

TOM. What! and miss the opportunity of waiting upon you? Never! (*Seats MARJORIE in chair; business of hunting for footstool.*)

MARJ. What are you looking for?

TOM (*takes cushion from couch*). I have it. (*Places it at MARJORIE'S feet.*) There! if your imagination is up to standard, and if we only had a stiff breeze blowing, you could fancy yourself upon the briny deep. (*Pours cup of tea; sings.*) "Sailing, sailing, over the ocean blue." (*Brings tea to MARJORIE.*) Didn't we have glorious times?

MARJ. Yes. (*Sipping tea.*) Do you remember the moonlight nights?

TOM. Do I? Don't I! (*Takes rug from model's chair, covers her with it.*) When I wrapped you warm like that, and wanted to do like this. (*Kisses her.*)

MARJ. O Tom!

TOM. (*sits upon arm of chair*). Isn't this just fine?

MARJ. (*sighs*). Yes; but it is too lovely to last.

TOM. Nonsense! Do you know, that to feel that you love me, Marjorie, gives me the strength to remove mountains. (*Grows eloquent.*) To brave the wind and waves (*rises, takes position*), to lead a troop of men to battle.

MARJ. (*quietly*). Shall you speak to Jack to-day?

TOM (*sinks into chair*). I—I suppose so; but I would rather fight a duel.

MARJ. (*rises; laughs*). And you were feeling so brave. You silly fellow! Before I would be afraid of a girl's brother!

TOM. Oh, it's all very well for you to stand there and laugh at me, but you haven't got to face the music.

MARJ. As long as it isn't the rogue's march, I wouldn't be afraid of any music.

TOM. I'm not. Don't you worry.

MARJ. I won't, and I will stand by and protect you. I will be your guardian. (*Holds out hands to TOM, who takes them.*)

TOM. My guardian angel! (*About to kiss her, when JACK enters; they separate.*)

(*Enter JACK, with letter in hand.*)

JACK. My conscience is clear at last. I have finished that letter, and now I am ready to—(*Sees TOM.*) Hallo! When did you arrive? (*They shake hands.*) Glad to see you.

TOM (*embarrassed*). Thank you. Nice day.

JACK. Yes; inside. (*Offers chair.*) Sit down and enjoy the blaze. Will you smoke?

TOM. No, thank you. (*Sits in chair by fire.*) Nice fire.

JACK. Yes; Marjorie and I have been enjoying it. (*Sits in chair opposite fire and mirror; MARJORIE serves tea.*) Are you anything of an artist?

TOM. Oh, no; but I like studios. (*Looking about room.*) Nice room.

JACK. Yes; rather cosey. (*Drinks tea; aside, imitates TOM.*) Nice boy.

MARJ. (*stands behind JACK's chair, drinking tea.*) Doesn't this remind you of five o'clock tea on board ship?

TOM. Yes, indeed.

JACK. So you two have crossed the ocean together.

TOM. Yes; together. (*Looks at MARJORIE, who smiles encouragingly.*)

MARJ. It was just glorious, Jack! The waves were so grand and powerful, I loved to watch them; and as the water dashed over the bow of the ship, I would stand for hours looking at it.

JACK. Alone? Of course.

MARJ. (*pulling his ear.*) Of course. But one night the storm was so severe, we were not allowed on deck. We could hear the water breaking against the sides of the vessel, while the wind was blowing a hurricane. We lost courage, and I surely thought we were going down; but the poor sailor in his lookout sent forth his watchword reassuringly, and, when the morning came, we found, indeed, that all was well, for the sun was shining brightly, and we were in smoother waters. (*Rests her head upon JACK's for a moment.*) I don't like to think of that time. If I had not come back, it wouldn't have been "All's well" to you, Jack, would it, dear?

JACK (*placing his hand upon hers*). Hardly. It wasn't your time to go, Marjorie, and it won't be, I hope, for some time to come. (*Speaks brightly.*) There is so much for you to do in this world, you will be a very busy woman. You must have had some jolly times crossing, when the weather was fine.

TOM. Indeed we did. (*Gives an embarrassed laugh.*) You know people very well on board ship. (*Repeats business of looking at MARJORIE.*)

JACK. Oh, yes, of course. Must be warm friends at the end of a voyage.

TOM. Sometimes you like them very much. (*Same business; JACK watches MARJORIE in glass.*)

JACK. Exactly.

TOM. And sometimes you love some one very much. (*MARJORIE throws him a kiss; looks in glass, sees JACK laughing at her.*)

JACK (*rises*). Ha, ha, Marjorie! Next time you telegraph kisses don't stand before a mirror when your old bachelor brother is looking there also. (*Brings MARJORIE down front; TOM follows.*) I understand, Mr. Dalton, from one or two remarks of Marjorie's (*MARJORIE tries to stop him*), and from one or two of

yours, that you both found something more interesting and attractive in the ocean voyage than the glories of the moon, the grandeur of the sea and sky. Oh, the moon did shine?

MARJ. } Oh, yes.
TOM. }

TOM. Nice moon.

JACK. And the result was that this little sister of mine lost her heart somewhere about mid-ocean.

TOM. Yes, sir. It floated to me, and if you are willing, I — I should like to anchor it in a safe harbor.

JACK (*offers hand*). Well said, Tom. I don't see as there is any other way for me to do but to allow you to adopt me as your elder brother: but this is such a practical world, we must not lose sight of it in the glamour of a moon-lit voyage. Marjorie, leave us for a few moments.

MARJ. Dear me! Business, of course. I won't give you but five minutes. Don't waste it in smoking. (*Exit.*)

JACK (*motions for TOM to be seated*). Sit down. (*TOM sits. JACK offers him cigarettes. TOM takes one. JACK offers light; both seated smoking.*) Now tell me all about yourself, Tom.

TOM. I am all right financially, Mr. Remington. I have just been admitted junior partner of the banking firm of Dalton & Gregory. You know the house, sir?

JACK. Only by reputation. Their standing is very high.

TOM. I have seen a bit of the world, and have travelled quite a little. I shall be very glad to settle down in London.

JACK. Has this been your home?

TOM. Only recently. My father formerly lived in India.

JACK. India?

TOM. Yes; though I was away at college at the time.

JACK. What is your father's name?

TOM. Robert Dalton.

JACK. Robert Dalton!

TOM. Do you know my father?

JACK. Yes; I was an artist in India eight years ago.

TOM (*rises*). Not the Remington who painted my sister's portrait?

JACK (*rises*). The very same.

TOM. My father never forgot the grand old fellow who made such a hero of himself in the service. (*Takes him by both hands.*) Why all India was agog with it. And Marjorie is your sister. What luck!

JACK. And yours?

TOM (*crosses to mantel*). Ruth married one of my father's friends, Richard Mallory. He is dead now. Well, I am pleased! My cigarette has gone out. Where do you keep your matches?

JACK. You will find them in a box at your right.

TOM (*takes piece of bronze from mantel*). Hallo! Where did you get this?

JACK. Your sister gave it to me. It is supposed to bring the possessor good luck. I am afraid it has missed its vocation. (*Speaks bitterly.*)

TOM (*aside*). I wonder if he loved Ruth. (*Aloud.*) Never knew it to fail. Sooner or later fortune will smile upon you. It is a useful thing, too. Valuable for sending private messages. Now, to look at it one would never think that it could contain anything. You press a spring so. (*Box opens and discloses paper.*) By Jove! here is one now.

JACK (*agitated; takes it from him*). Yes; I use it for private papers.

TOM. I beg ten thousand pardons. I did not mean to intrude.

JACK (*returns bronze to mantel*). I forgive you.

TOM (*aside*). I believe that he was in love with Ruth.

(*Enter MARJORIE.*)

MARJ. Your time is up. Everything settled?

JACK. Yes; very satisfactorily. I find that I knew Tom's father in India.

MARJ. Then we can all be such good friends. I want you to know Tom's sister, Mrs. Mallory. (*JACK turns away; TOM watches him.*) She is so sweet and lovely. I know you would like her; and (*laughing*), who knows, perhaps you will fall in love.

TOM. Your brother and I have agreed that you must obey me to the letter.

MARJ. Indeed, I have not signed any such contract.

TOM. Come with me, and we will sign it now. (*TOM and MARJORIE exeunt, R. JACK follows them to the door; stands looking.*)

JACK. The old, old story. They love one another. The very sun shines more brightly for them. I hope Marjorie will not be disappointed. Tom is a lucky fellow. If every woman had as true a heart, there would be less of bitterness in the world. (*Crosses to mantel.*) And I too once loved, and was happy in the knowledge. (*Takes up bronze.*) To think that so small a piece of bronze could hold hidden within itself a man's fate. (*Takes paper from bronze; reads.*) "My answer is no." Ah, Ruth Dalton! why did you lead me to paint upon my heart as well as upon the canvas the image of your face and beauty? (*Turns down lamp upon table; sits before fire.*) The light from the fire is sufficient. I like to sit here and think; to picture in the flames what might have been. Oh, those happy days in India! I can see her now, dressed in a soft, clinging gown, as she sat before me. We chatted upon the current news of the day, ne'er dreamed of love at first. At last, with every stroke of the brush, love guided my hand, and the words I had not the courage to utter breathed softly from the work upon the canvas. Not until the portrait was finished did I dare to speak; with what anxiety I awaited the answer to my letter. At last it came, enclosed in this bit of bronze. Those few words

changed my whole life. But what nonsense, Remington. Shake yourself together, old man, and don't sit before a fire sighing for a pretty woman. So I am to lose Marjorie, and she will be Mrs. Tom Dalton. (*Laughs.*) Bless her sweet heart! I hope she will be happy. She deserves it. (*Yawns.*) I must be growing lazy in my old age. I feel inclined to take a nap before the fire. (*Yawns.*) Mrs. Tom Dalton. My Marjorie to be married. Mrs. Tom — (*Falls asleep.*)

(*Enter MARJORIE.*)

MARJ. Jack! (*No answer.*) Jack! (*Crosses to fireplace.*) Here he is, asleep. Now that I am settled for life, he thinks that he can take a nap. Dear old Jack! He is so alone. I wonder if he is comfortable. Let me see. (*Places sofa-pillow on floor, raises JACK'S feet gently, places them upon pillow.*) There, that is better! I want him to see Mrs. Mallory. He can't help falling in love with her.

TOM (*calls.*) Marjorie!

MARJ. Dear me, what trials men are! I can't move out of Tom's sight but I hear him calling me. I wonder if it will be so after we are married. I may be the one who will call. (*Exit L.*)

(*Enter MRS. MALLORY.*)

MRS. MALLORY (*speaks brightly*). May I come in? May I come in? No one here. "Silence gives consent," so I suppose I may. This must be the studio. Yes; there are sketches upon the walls and upon the easels. I must be right. (*Takes up hat from chair; looks inside.*) Tom's hat. He must be here. Dear fellow! he is so madly in love, he's Miss Marjorie's shadow. (*Crosses to fireplace.*) Why, here he is asleep! Well, upon my word! Calling upon a pretty woman, and taking a nap. This will never do. I must teach him better manners. (*Behind chair; places hands over JACK'S eyes.*) Tom, Tom, dear!

JACK (*awakens, catches MRS. MALLORY'S hands, holds them, and draws her to him*). Is that you, Marjorie? (*They recognize one another.*)

MRS. M. Jack Remington!

JACK (*rises*). Ruth Dalton!

MRS. M. I—I beg your pardon. I thought you were Tom.

JACK (*brushes hands across eyes*). Am I dreaming? (*Turns up light on table.*) No, no; it is all real. Ruth, Ruth, how came you here?

MRS. M. I came to see Marjorie's picture. I was not aware that the brother of the young girl whom I had grown to love so dearly was the Mr. Remington whom I met in India.

JACK (*offers chair*). Won't you be seated? Your sudden appearance made me forget my manners.

MRS. M. (*sits by table*). Thank you. You have left India?

JACK. Yes; and have become wedded to my art. I was wounded during the service. I drifted back to my own country.

MRS. M. Your friends in India were very proud of you. They called you the hero of the hour.

JACK. It was very kind of my friends; but there was more of foolhardiness than bravery. (*Looks at her with meaning.*) There are some things that only the shot and shell of battle can erase from one's memory.

MRS. M. (*returns his look*). And those who cannot take their wrongs to battle, who have no means of winning golden laurels, must bury their sorrows deep within their hearts.

JACK. You have left India?

MRS. M. I returned two months ago. We have been living in London. You left your friends in India without bidding them good-by.

JACK (*coldly*). I paid my respects to all who wished them. We are upon dangerous ground, Mrs. Mallory. (*Rises.*) I will speak to Marjorie.

MRS. M. (*coldly*). If you will, please. (*JACK bows coldly and exits.*)

MRS. M. (*rises*). What strange workings of fate have led me to these doors. "Dangerous ground!" Yes, he speaks truly. And my brother loves his sister. (*Crosses to fireplace.*) O Jack, Jack! What was it that came into our lives eight years ago and made me so desolate?

(*Enter MARJORIE, R.*)

MARJ. My dear Mrs. Mallory, how good of you to come!

MRS. M. I could not possibly have stayed away. I am so anxious to see your picture.

MARJ. (*leads her to easel*). There are to be a few more touches, I believe.

MRS. M. It is beautiful. Your brother has a master touch. His work reminds me of an artist — whom I once met in India.

MARJ. India! Why, Jack was there several years ago.

MRS. M. Indeed! (*Looks at curtain.*) What treasure lies hidden there.

MARJ. Only an empty frame. (*Leads her to couch; both seated.*) It once held the portrait of the woman whom my brother loved very dearly.

MRS. M. (*agitated*). Tell me about Tom.

MARJ. Everything is perfectly lovely. Tom spoke to Jack to-day.

MRS. M. And he is willing?

MARJ. Oh, yes. You see, he likes Tom, and then he knew your father in India. Isn't that funny? So strange that you and Jack have never met.

MRS. M. Oh, I spent most of my time travelling.

MARJ. Dear old Jack! I want you to know him. He is so sad

and lonely sometimes. I shall never forgive that horrid woman for breaking his heart. (*Arm about MRS. MALLORY.*) Wouldn't it be just too lovely for anything if you two would fall in love with one another.

MRS. M. (*assumes gayety*). Nonsense, my dear girl! Because you are in love with Tom you think that every one should follow your example.

MARJ. (*laughs*). That is just it. I wish every one to be as happy as I am. (*Rises.*) You must have a cup of tea. I know you are fond of it. (*Crosses to tea-table.*)

MRS. M. I never refuse it. (*Follows her.*) Your brother seems to have a fondness for Indian curios.

MARJ. Yes. One or two lumps?

MRS. M. One, dear. (*Takes up bronze; starts; aside.*) The talisman that I gave him.

MARJ. (*brings her a cup of tea*). Isn't that a curious old bronze? It seems to have very valuable associations for Jack.

MRS. M. Valuable?

MARJ. Yes; Jack says that it is valuable because it is a constant reminder that he must not fall in love with a pretty woman. (*Laughing.*) See what an ugly face it has. That is the strange part of it. Why, how pale you look! (*Seats her in chair.*) There! do sit down. I am so thoughtless.

MRS. M. It must be the heat of the fire. I am better now. (*Drinks tea.*) Your tea is refreshing.

MARJ. I am so glad. I will speak to Tom. May I bring my brother Jack?

MRS. M. Not now, dear, if you do not mind. I still feel faint.

MARJ. Then it shall only be Tom this time. (*Exit.*)

MRS. M. It isn't the fire, little Marjorie. A flood of bitter memories has overpowered me. (*Rises; takes bronze.*) Eight years ago you loved me, Jack Remington. I sent my answer in this talisman. It was "Yes;" my heart full of love for him. I waited for his coming, but in vain. He entered the army, and went out of my life completely. What could it have meant? And why this bitterness when we meet again? I wonder if the message is still here? It will do no harm to look. (*Opens bronze; reads.*) "My answer is no." What does this mean? My message was intercepted. Who could have been so cruel? I did not know that I had an enemy in the world. This, then, explains his sudden departure. O Jack! how you have misjudged me all these years!

(*Enter MARJORIE and TOM, R.*)

MARJ. Here he is, Mrs. Mallory.

TOM. You have found your way at last to the enchanted castle where my princess dwells. (*Places MARJORIE'S arm in his.*) Not a bad-looking couple, are we? Marjorie has promised to obey me in everything.

MARJ. Indeed I have not!

TOM. Then we must sign that contract again. (*Attempts to kiss her.*)

MARJ. (*preventing him*). Once is enough — for the present. You are feeling better, Mrs. Mallory?

MRS. M. Oh, yes! It was only a little faintness. Your cup of tea has refreshed me wonderfully. (*Rises.*) I am quite myself again.

MARJ. Then you will surely see Jack.

MRS. M. Not now, dear. Some other time. I have an appointment later. (*Stands between them, hand upon arm of each.*) It is a pleasure to see you both so happy. Guard your love from doubts and petty jealousies. Love is too rich a blessing to be trifled with. (*Speaks lightly.*) There! I have preached you a little sermon, and hope you will treat me with proper respect and dignity for such wise sayings.

MARJ. (*arm about her*). I shall love you dearly, and shall be so glad to have you for a sister. And I know Jack will be too.

MRS. M. (*embarrassed*). Thank you, dear. But I must go. Tom, will you be my escort?

TOM. Certainly, Ruth. (*Takes gloves from pocket.*) Oh, this reminds me. (*Takes letter from pocket.*) Here is a letter for you from India.

MRS. M. From India? Oh, yes! my solicitors.

TOM. Open it. It may be something important.

MRS. M. I think it can wait.

TOM. But I can't. You will excuse us, won't you, Marjorie?

MARJ. Certainly. (*Busies herself at tea-table; finally exit.*)

MRS. M. Children should be amused. (*Takes from envelope two letters; reads.*)

MRS. MALLORY,

Dear Madam, — Your aunt, Mrs. Gardner, died two months ago. Enclosed you will find a letter, which she desired should be sent you.

Respectfully yours,

RICHARD CREIGHTON.

(*Speaks.*) Aunt Rebecca dead!

TOM. I hope she has left you a handsome legacy. She did all she could while living to make your life miserable.

MRS. M. (*lays hand upon TOM's arm; speaks gently*). No matter now, Tom. She is dead. (*Opens letter; reads. Becomes agitated.*) O Tom! am I dreaming? (*TOM reads letter aloud.*)

MY DEAR NIECE. — I have a confession to make. When you read this try not to think too unkindly of me, for I shall be counted amongst those whose earthly life is ended. Eight years ago, Mr. Remington, the artist, loved you. Your Cousin Richard, my son, was also an ardent suitor, and begged me to help him win you. I saw you give the Indian curio to a messenger, intercepted it, and — forgive me — changed the answer.

TOM (*speaks*). A devil in petticoats.

MRS. M. (*sinks into chair*). O Tom, I am so happy! (*Bursts into tears.*)

TOM. (*hands in his pockets; whistles*). The deuce you are! Then you loved Marjorie's brother?

MRS. M. Yes; I always have.

TOM. (*hand upon her shoulder*). We will have it O.K. in five minutes, Ruth. I will go and find him.

MRS. M. (*rises; detains him*). You will do nothing of the kind. He probably does not love me now.

TOM. Gad! that's so. I never thought of that.

(*Enter MARJORIE.*)

MARJ. Did you have good news in your letter?

TOM. Yes; just immense. It is as good as a fairy story. Let me tell it you.

MRS. M. No, Tom; I will. (*Leads MARJORIE to couch; both seated.*) Once upon a time a young woman, while living in India, met an artist, who desired to paint her portrait. He was so manly, seemed to possess so much strength of character, that the girl soon lost her heart.

MARJ. He must have been something like Jack.

MRS. M. He returned her love, and they were very happy together. He sent her a letter asking her to be his wife; and she, wishing that her love should bring him good fortune, sent an acceptance in an old Indian curio, a talisman for whomsoever should possess it. Then a wicked fairy came along, disguised as an old aunt, who wished the young lady to marry some one else, and changed the answer.

MARJ. The horrid old woman.

MRS. M. Believing that his love was not returned, the young man entered the army, and was so brave and courageous upon the field of battle that all India sang his praises. After waiting and hoping for three years that her lover would return, she consented to marry one of her father's friends, still loving the artist. Eight years passed — meanwhile the husband died; and the woman, now a widow, received upon the death of the wicked fairy, the aunt, a written confession of the unkind act which she had committed.

MARJ. Did the artist marry?

MRS. M. No; he became wedded to his art. (*Rises.*) Marjorie, I have been telling you my own story.

MARJ. Oh, I am so glad it came out all right! You have only to find the young man.

MRS. M. And if that man should be your brother?

MARJ. What, really! my brother Jack?

MRS. M. Yes.

MARJ. (*embraces her*). Oh, I am perfectly delighted! Jack will be so glad. (*Makes for door, L.*)

MRS. M. (*detains her*). Where are you going, Marjorie?

MARJ. To tell Jack.

MRS. M. But Jack may not love me now.

MARJ. Oh, but I am sure that he does. Do let me tell him.

MRS. M. No; I must be sure first. What shall I do?

TOM. Let him see aunt's letter.

MARJ. Yes; and while he is reading it, you watch him. You will very soon find out. I know (*draws aside curtain*), the empty frame. Let the picture live again.

MRS. M. But how?

MARJ. With your own dear self.

TOM. Marjorie, you are a trump!

MRS. M. (*eagerly*). Give me some paper, Marjorie.

MARJ. (*brings writing materials*). Do say something nice to him. Think how lonely he has been all these years.

MRS. M. (*writes; encloses paper with letter in envelope*). It must be placed where he can see it.

TOM. Yes; here by the lamp. Now for it.

MRS. M. My heart is beating so.

TOM. I am with you there. Mine is beating a regular military tattoo. I could not feel more frightened if I were to be married.

MARJ. (*turns up light by frame, draws aside curtain*). Come, Mrs. Mallory.

MRS. M. Yes. (*Goes to portière at door, c.*) Don't leave me, Marjorie.

TOM. Oh, a third party would spoil all the fun. Then it is time to sign that contract again.

MARJ. Now, Tom, send Jack to us.

TOM. You won't stay?

MARJ. Only to speak to Jack. (*TOM exit.*)

MRS. M. Marjorie.

MARJ. Yes, dear.

MRS. M. Do you think that Jack will be glad?

MARJ. Glad? (*Clasps her hands.*) I know he will be just as happy as I am.

(*Enter JACK, smoking.*)

JACK. Tom said that you wished to speak with me.

MARJ. (*leads him to chair before fire*). Yes. Sit down; I want to talk with you.

JACK (*sits*). Of Tom?

MARJ. (*kneels beside him*). No. Tell me about Mrs. Mallory.

JACK. Don't talk of it, dear. I try so hard to forget it. The sight of her brought back the old love. It was all a mistake; she never cared for me.

MARJ. Perhaps there was some misunderstanding.

JACK. How could there have been? I would not believe the answer, and called twice. (*Bitterly.*) She would not receive me.

MARJ. But now that she is so near us, perhaps you could win her love.

JACK. No; too late. I will never again dream of such happiness, but bask in the warmth of domestic felicity at your fireside.

MARJ. (*rises*). Jack, I feel sure that it was the ship of fate in

which Tom and I crossed the ocean. It brought happiness to us, and it will come to you. Something tells me that the good days are coming back again.

JACK. No, no; that is impossible.

MARJ. (*arm about his neck*). On that stormy night at sea the simple cry, "All's well," came to us, bidding us be patient and wait. Perhaps it will come to you, and that from the ashes of your buried hopes a greater happiness may arise. (*Kisses him.*) If it comes, no one will rejoice more than your sister Marjorie. (*Exit.*)

JACK. "Buried hopes!" Yes; so deeply that they have ceased to strive to rise. Strange, after all these years, we should meet again. She shall never know how much I cared. And yet I thought she loved me. We seemed to be so happy in those days. With winning smile and sweet glances she led me on, then threw my love aside, a mere bauble, an empty nothingness. I wish I had not seen her. I had hoped that I had forgotten. Ah, no! in the fitful flames I see the face of the woman I loved. My ears seem to echo with the sound of her voice when she spoke.

MRS. M. (*unable to control herself, speaks softly*). Jack.

JACK (*listens*). An odd fancy. I thought some one called. (*Rises; crosses to couch; lounges upon it; smokes.*) I can see her now, as she sat for her portrait, her eyes so bright and glorious, her lips parted, as though she would say—

MRS. M. (*softly*). Jack.

JACK (*rises*). No fancy this time. (*Goes to door, L.*) No, it was not Marjorie, she is busy with Tom. (*Crosses to table; sees envelope.*) Hallo! what is this? (*Opens letter; reads.*) "When you have read the enclosed letter, if you still love me, seek me. Ruth." (*Sinks into chair.*) What can this mean? (*Reads letter.*) How could any one have been so cruel! Ruth, you have loved me all these years. (*Rises.*) Seek you? Indeed, I will. Marjorie is right; the old days are coming back again.

RUTH (*speaks softly*). Jack.

JACK (*turns; notices light by picture*). What does this light mean? (*Draws aside curtain; tableau.* RUTH stands behind frame; holds out hands to JACK.) "Ruth!

MRS. M. Yes. You still love me, then?

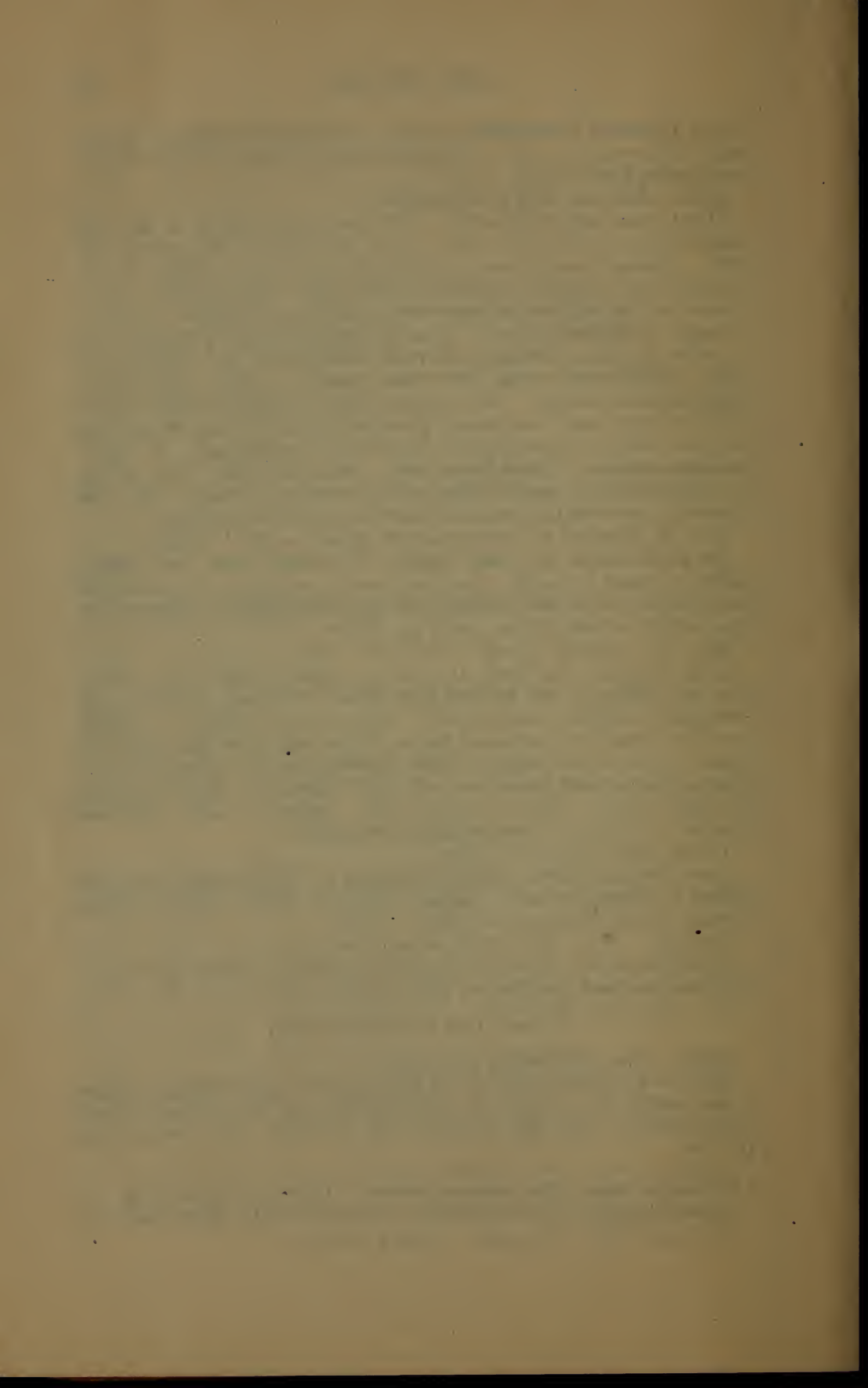
JACK (*takes her hands in his; kisses them*). Still love you? My love has been and always will be yours.

(*Enter TOM and MARJORIE.*)

MARJ. Have you found her, Jack?

JACK. Yes. See! the picture lives again. The frame no longer is an empty one. Again it holds the face of the woman I have always loved. Like my heart, it will hold and wear forever her picture.

(*Tableau. MRS. MALLORY in frame. JACK stands in at R. of frame; holds out hands to her. TOM and MARJORIE down L., looking at MRS. MALLORY. Quick curtain.*)



THREE NEW COMEDIES.

A LIMB O' THE LAW.

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS.

By **M. R. ORNE,**

AUTHOR OF "THE COUNTRY SCHOOL," "A BLACK DIAMOND," ETC.

Six male and four female characters. Costumes modern and easy; scenery, two simple interiors. Plays about an hour and a quarter. This piece humorously describes the straits of a young lawyer without practice and his ingenious way of raising the wind. It is quiet in action and refined in tone, but uproariously funny, particularly the second act, the complications of which are side-splitting. Contains a capital negro part.

Price, 15 cents.

A MAJORITY OF ONE,

Or, LOVE AND MUSHROOMS.

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

By **FRANCIS A. HARRIS,**

AUTHOR OF "CHUMS," "CLASS DAY," "OLD PROBABILITIES," ETC.

Three male and two female characters. Costumes and scenery perfectly simple. Plays forty-five minutes. An admirable farce, not of the noisy sort, but brim full of quiet humor. Timothy Norcross's political ambition and Henry Mason's amatory plans continually get in one another's way with amusing consequences. Their misunderstandings are innumerable and immensely funny, and the piece is a sure hit. Under its second title it was originally played by the Pi Eta Society, of Harvard College.

Price, 15 cents.

A CIGARETTE FROM JAVA.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

By **T. RUSSELL SULLIVAN.**

(As performed for the first time at the Boston Museum, Oct. 13, 1879.)

Four male and two female characters. Costumes modern, with one exception; scenery very simple. This is a most delicate and ingenious piece of comedy writing, refined in humor and sentiment. Tcherita, an Oriental girl, who appears in Eastern costume, has a cigarette which irresistibly compels the one who smokes it to utter what is uppermost in his mind. Its use in unravelling the tangle of Regina's lovers is the action of the piece.

Price, 15 cents.

A NEW PLAY FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS.

A KING'S DAUGHTER.

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS.

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY.

By **RACHEL E. BAKER,**

AUTHOR OF "THE CHAPERON," "AFTER TAPS," "BOB," ETC.

Eleven female characters. Scenery, an interior and an exterior. Costumes, modern. Plays two hours. This piece is an excellent solution of the difficult problem of writing a strong acting play for female characters only. Nan Graham's self-denying heroism and laudable ambition arouse the strongest dramatic sympathy, and her right to wear "the silver cross" is faithfully won. Ample humorous incident and plenty of enjoyable girlish frivolity serve to relieve the trials of the heroine. This piece will not only serve to promulgate the charitable objects of the organization from which it takes its name, but will make a strong dramatic appeal.

Price 25 Cents.

SYNOPSIS:

- ACT I. Mrs. Graham's drawing-room. The King's Daughters. Rebecca and the deacon. A belated love-story. "The name of Rebecca Spencer will always live." Nan's lover. The poor relation. An unknown friend. The sewing bee. Nan's secret. The Kodak. Mab's poetry. Tea and tease. Polly's ruse. "It is good cake, Helen." THE LOST LETTER.
- ACT II. The Fair. Polly makes her mark. The post-office. Tender correspondence. Patient Nan. Kitty's cake. Polly and the glue. Sallie's candy. The secret of the letter. Business. Florence and the soda-fountain. The letter found. Nan's trial. The sacrifice. Duty before all. "My house is no longer her home, if she refuses." Nan's choice. The world before her. IN HIS NAME.
- ACT III. In the hay-field. The mysterious hostess. Nan's birthday. Miss Rebecca's "Romeo." Polly's speech. Regrets. "Is there no atonement I can make?" The Deacon speaks at last. Rebecca's discovery. Helen. "I will never again call myself a King's Daughter until Nan has forgiven me." Coals of fire. The dairy-maids' dance. THE FAIRY GODMOTHER. A surprise. Nan's inheritance. The tell-tale photograph. A new Cinderella. Aunt Clarissa's mystery. The explanation. "A KING'S DAUGHTER."

A NEW COMEDIETTA.

A BORROWED UMBRELLA.

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT.

By **ESTHER B. TIFFANY,**

AUTHOR OF "A RICE PUDDING," "A MODEL LOVER," ETC.

Two male and two female characters. Scenery, unimportant; costumes modern. A very bright and graceful little trifle. Plays only about fifteen minutes.

Price 15 Cents.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SHAMROCK AND ROSE."

A BIT O' BLARNEY.

AN IRISH PLAY OF THE PRESENT TIME IN THREE ACTS.

By **FITZGERALD MURPHY.**

AUTHOR OF "SHAMROCK AND ROSE," "THE IRISH STATESMAN," ETC.

As originally performed at the Park Theatre, Los Angeles, Cal., April 10, 1893.

Nine male and two female characters. Modern costumes. Scenery, an exterior and two interiors, not difficult. Time in playing, two hours and a half. This is an entirely new and original drama of Irish life. Its plot is unconventional and stirring, its interest is absorbing, its incident fresh and abundant and its dialogue replete with true Irish wit, humor, sentiment and poetry. Rody, the Rover, originally played by the author, is a near relation of Boucicault's "Conn" and "Shaun." Mr. Lawton, the American lawyer, is a capital part; Cuddeen Cassidy, Corkerry, Darby Darney and Shevaun are excellent character bits. This is a very strong piece alike in plot and character, and acts itself.

Price 25 Cents.

SYNOPSIS:

- ACT I. Glen Blarney by moonlight. Old-fashioned love-making. The arrival of the American. The rescue. The first chapter in an international romance. A story of California. Rody and the leprehaun. The story of Rosaleen. The black bird and the dove. The blow. Love under the furze-blossoms. The trust. The robbery and the murder. **THE ACCUSATION.**
- ACT II. Shevaun's shebeen at sunset. The May-day festivities. The Queen o' the May. Cuddeen Cassidy falls into the wrong company. The old, old story. Lord and peasant. The proposal. The story of the murder. Arrival of the police. The parting. **THE ARREST.**
- ACT III. Blarney Manor. "The darkest hour before the dawn." A California game of bluff. The murderer and the ghost. The widow's predicament. The conspirators. **THE BIT O' BLARNEY.** Rosaleen's peril. The attempted assassination. The tables turned. **SQUIRE RODY.**

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS ONLY.

THE GOVERNESS.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

FOR FEMALE CHARACTERS.

Three characters, two of which impersonate two others as well. Scenery, a simple interior. Costumes of the last century, but may be modern, if desired. An admirable piece for two clever girls, good at disguises, providing a bright and snappy entertainment for school or hall.

Price 15 Cents.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A RICE PUDDING."

A MODEL LOVER.

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS.

By **ESTHER B. TIFFANY,**

AUTHOR OF "A BORROWED UMBRELLA," "THAT PATRICK," "YOUNG MR. PRITCHARD," "A RICE PUDDING," "THE WAY TO HIS POCKET," "ANITA'S TRIAL," "AN AUTOGRAPH LETTER," ETC.

Three male and three female characters. Costumes modern, save the dress of the "model" for which any picturesque costume will do. Scene, an artist's studio, very easily improvised. This is a clever and graceful little play in Miss Tiffany's characteristic manner. The story is interesting, the dialogue delicately humorous, the characterization strong and humanly quaint. Can be strongly recommended to the best taste in such matters.

Price 15 Cents.

A NEW PARLOR FARCE.

PER TELEPHONE.

A FARCE IN ONE ACT.

BY

MARGARET MONTCOMERY.

Two male and three female characters. Scene, a drawing-room; costumes, modern and elegant. A very bright and amusing little play developing in its action some of the perils of making love by telephone. Mr. Guy Harling, by making use of this mode of communication, proposes to Nan's cousin instead of Nan Cuzzin, to his great consternation. A very bright little piece for **parlor performance.**

Price 15 Cents.

A NEW WAR DRAMA.

AT THE PICKET LINE.

A Military Drama of the Civil War in Five Acts.

By **JUSTIN ADAMS,**

AUTHOR OF "T'RISS; OR, BEYOND THE ROCKIES," "THE INFERNAL MACHINE," "DAWN," "THE SUICIDE CLUB," "THE ENGINEER,"
"THE RAG-PICKER'S CHILD," "THE LIMIT OF THE LAW,"
"DOWN EAST," ETC.

Ten male and three female characters. Costumes modern and military. Scenery varied, but not difficult. This piece is a proven success, having been on the road for several seasons, and is now printed for the first time with all the original "business" and stage directions. Its story is ingenious and absorbing in interest, its sentiment genuinely patriotic, its dialogue vigorous and its humor abundant. An excellent battle scene and a camp scene, both perfectly practicable, admirably fit it for the use of Grand Army entertainments. All the characters are strong, Cherrington, the hero, being very magnetic, and Silvy, a refined soubrette, a part of great opportunity.

Price 25 Cents.

SYNOPSIS:

- ACT I. The Northern home. "The best darter that ever lived." Hiram and Silvy. A wayward son. Albert Cherrington. More than a brother. The mortgage. The hawk and the dove. "Too late! He has given his word." Silvy speaks. "But I havn't."
- ACT II. SCENE 1. Dissembling. The wedding ring. A deserter. The awkward squad. "The gal I left behind me." French leave. The wrong man. An easy promotion. UNDER ARREST. SCENE 2. At headquarters. "A wise recruit that knows his own name." The missing witness. Crosscomb again. "I never saw that man before in all my life." DOOMED.
- ACT III. At the picket line. Camp followers. The fringe of a plot. In rebel uniform. Leonora and Caleb. Outwitted. "Remember that one live woman is more dangerous than a hundred dead men." Surrendered to a girl. SCENE 2. The battle. A skulker. Playing possum. A bold charge. "Another victory for the North." SCENE 3. After the battle. Robbing the dead. The vision of Silvy. THE RECOGNITION. "No! He is a Union spy."
- ACT IV. The Union camp. Humors of camp life. "A drop o' the crater." A vile plot. The warning. "Here's a small bottle for yourself alone." The tables turned. "My God, the liquor was poisoned!" The traitor's death. "It means that I, who have almost starved for a crust of bread, am now a millionaire."
- ACT V. The North again. A ruined home. The returned soldier. Crosscomb once more. Silvy's wedding day. Albert Cherrington. Dark before the dawn. "Ah, it is *his* ring." Hiram lifts the veil. "Yes, Silvy, he is a-living." Crosscomb crossed. "Then her father's son will pay it." The altar and the halter. UNITED.

A NEW MONOLOGUE FOR A GENTLEMAN.

THE PROPOSAL.

By **HECTOR FEZANDIÉ.**

One male character in modern costume. A very clever and ingenious little story of every-day life, very lively and dramatic. Plays twelve minutes.

Price 15 Cents.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE STOLEN WILL."

THE FINGER OF FATE

OR, THE DEATH LETTER.

A MELODRAMA IN THREE ACTS.

By **LEN ELLSWORTH TILDEN.**

AUTHOR OF "THE STOLEN WILL," "THE EMIGRANT'S DAUGHTER," etc.

Eight male and three female characters. Several changes of scene in each act, but all "drops" — not difficult. Costumes modern and easy. The action of this piece is very exciting, its situations numerous and strong, and its humor abundant. Lewis Prouty, the reporter, a character originally played by the author, is a very "fat" part. Crazy Maud and Brigham Webster are powerful "heavy" characters. The thousands who have played and liked this author's "Stolen Will" will find in his latest piece another "hit." The following extract from a letter from the late William Warren, to whom the piece was originally offered, will serve to show how it appeared from the standpoint of this theatrical veteran :

BULFINCH PLACE, BOSTON, MASS., May, 1882.

MR. TILDEN,

Dear Sir :—

. The secret of a good play is short, crisp dialogue and action. Such is your play "The Death Letter."

WILLIAM WARREN.

This piece has been on the road during the past ten years under contract with the author, and is now published for the first time.

Price 15 Cents.

A NEW COMEDIETTA.

A MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENT.

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT.

By **ECBERT W. FOWLER.**

AUTHOR OF "A LOVER'S STRATAGEM."

One male and one female character. Scene, a simple interior. Costumes modern. This clever and ingenious solution of a quarrel between two young people will make an excellent "curtain raiser." Very amusing and perfectly refined. Plays about twenty minutes.

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Hunt the Thimble. In One Act. Words by A. G. LEWIS; music by LEO R. LEWIS. Two male, two female characters and small chorus. Simple and pretty. PRICE, 50 CENTS.

Red Riding Hood's Rescue. In Four Scenes. Words by J. E. ESTABROOK; music by J. ASTOR BROAD. Three male, four female characters and chorus. PRICE, 50 CENTS.

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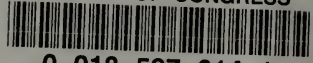
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